

REMARKS

This is in reply to the Office Action dated October 22, 2002. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons which follow.

By way of the present amendment, Applicant has amended independent claims 8, 14, and 27 to more particularly point out and distinctly claim Applicant's invention. Claims 8-10, 12-14 and 16-27 remain pending in this application.

The pending claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Keller, U.S. Patent No. 5,137,182, in view of Simmen, U.S. Patent No. 5,413,253. Applicant respectfully maintains that the claims, prior to amendment, are patentable over the cited combination of references for those reasons previously made of record. However, in order to facilitate allowance, Applicant has amended the independent claims to more specifically describe the particular shape of the outlets of the dispensing appliance, and the correspondingly shaped plugs of the claimed closure member.

In regard to the amended claims, it is noted that neither the cited Keller patent nor Simmen teach describe or suggest coding elements as recited in the claims, which include corresponding, cylinder-shaped appliance outlets and closure member plugs. In particular, the Keller reference discloses a stopper with stoppers 14 that match the dispensing canals 4. As illustrated in Fig. 1, for example, the shape of the stoppers 14 are not cylindrical.

The rejection is premised on the suggestion in Keller of different cross-sectional outlets. According to the Office Action, this inherently results in outlets of different configurations. Even if this is accepted, such modification of the outlets would not result in cylindrical-shaped outlets or corresponding cylinder-shaped plugs, each having different configurations so as to ensure coded attachment.

The dependent claims incorporate the respective features of the amended independent claims and are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims, as well as the additional features recited therein. Additionally, several of the dependent

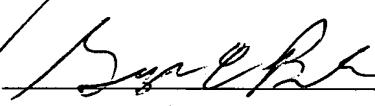
claims further recite means for preventing contact between the outlets and the plugs, thereby preventing cross-contamination. (See claims 23 and 25.) Dependent claims 24 and 26 more specifically recite that such means comprise protrusions provided on a front surface of the dispensing appliance. It is respectfully submitted that this combination of features, including cylindrical-shaped plugs and protrusions that prevent cross-contamination, is not taught, disclosed or suggested in either of the references cited in the Office Action. Claims 23-26 are therefore believed to be allowable for this additional reason.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED UP VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE

Below are the marked up amended claim(s):

8. (Fourth Time Amended) A dispensing assembly, comprising:

 a dispensing appliance including a plurality of chambers each having [an] a cylindrical-shaped outlet and a first bayonet coupling;

 a mixer including a housing with a plurality of inlets corresponding in number to the outlets, each inlet being configured to engage a respective one of said outlets, a mixer element disposed in said housing, and a second bayonet coupling complementary with said first bayonet coupling of said dispensing appliance, said first bayonet coupling being detachable from said second bayonet coupling and together forming a detachable bayonet assembly;

 a detachable closure member for closing said dispensing appliance when said mixer is detached from the dispensing appliance, said closure member having a plurality of plugs corresponding in number to the outlets for closing each of said outlets; and

 complementary coding elements formed on said dispensing appliance and said mixer to permit said inlets of said mixer to be aligned with and connected to the respective outlets of said dispensing appliance in only one orientation said coding elements comprising outlets of a different configuration relative to each other and said inlets being configured to conform thereto;

 wherein said closure member includes coding elements configured in the same manner as the mixer to connect with the dispensing appliance in only one orientation.

14. (Thrice Amended) A dispensing appliance for a mixer, the mixer having a plurality of inlets, the dispensing appliance comprising:

 a plurality of chambers each having [an] cylindrical-shaped outlet for engagement with the inlets of the mixer, each said outlet of said chambers being of a different configuration from each other to permit the respective inlets of the mixer to align with and connect to said outlets in only one orientation; and

 a bayonet coupling on said dispensing appliance for detachably connecting the mixer to said dispensing appliance; and

a detachable closure member for closing said dispensing appliance when detached from the mixer, said closure member having a cylindrical-shaped plug for closing each said outlet, each said plug being configured to align with and connect to each said outlet of said plurality of chambers in only one orientation.

27. (Amended) A closure member for a dispensing appliance having a bayonet coupling, wherein the dispensing appliance includes a bayonet coupling and a plurality of chambers each having an outlet for engagement with the inlets of a mixer, each said outlet of said chambers being cylindrical-shaped and of a different configuration from each other to permit the respective inlets of the mixer to align with and connect to the outlets of the dispensing appliance in only one orientation, the closure member having a plurality of cylindrical-shaped plugs corresponding in number to the outlets of the dispensing appliance for closing each said outlet, each plug being configured to align with and connect to each outlet in only one orientation.